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# ***JPRS Report***

## **Near East & South Asia**

***ALGERIA***

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# Near East & South Asia

## ALGERIA

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22 December 1992

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## International Affairs

### Diplomacy 'Tied' to Accepting Security Measures

93AF0199B Algiers LIBERTE in French  
4 Nov 92, pp 1, 24

[Commentary by Anouar Aouida: "HCE (Higher State Council) Decides That Diplomatic Activity Should Be Adapted to Security Measures"; first paragraph is LIBERTE introduction]

[Text] The HCE [Higher State Council] has emphasized the need for Algerian diplomacy to adapt its activity to measures concerning the internal security of the country.

Would Algeria consider any particular diplomatic action to be taken toward countries that apparently show that they are in contact with the former FIS [Islamic Salvation Front]? The question is suggested by reading the latest communique of the HCE, which it published after its meeting held on 3 November. In this communique the highest leadership body of the country emphasized "the need for strengthening our diplomatic activity, making it adequate to its functions and its orientations, which aim at preserving public order and ensuring the stability of the state, essential conditions for the promotion of democracy and the resumption of development."

A few days after the visit to Algeria of Roland Dumas, minister of state for foreign affairs of France, this HCE statement is particularly important. Since French President Francois Mitterrand called the suspension of the elections following the resignation of Chadli Bendjedid as president of Algeria, "something that is at least abnormal," and because Bernard Kouchner expressed his desire to "visit" the "security centers" in southern Algeria, many things have changed, and we seem to know France better. The expulsion of Qamr Eddine Kherbane and Rachid Bounoua, two notorious terrorists, as well as the recent breakup of a network of persons linked to the FIS are proof of this. By making the "preservation of public order" and of the "stability of the state" "essential conditions for the promotion of democracy and the resumption of development," the HCE seems to want to say to France that, "If you want to see true democracy established in Algeria, as you have let it be known, you should not criticize us for the actions which we take to reach that goal."

Other actions will certainly be taken regarding Sudan and Iran, which have been directly mentioned by Hocine Abderrahim. According to him, these two countries had expressed their willingness to help the Islamists to carry out an armed revolution in Algeria.

At the moment no indication has been given about the nature of the actions to be taken. However, it should be recalled that the chief of government has stated that in the area of diplomacy we should never display any haste. Asked by a member of the National Consultative Council (CCN) about an eventual break in diplomatic relations with Iran and Sudan, the chief of state replied that there were "factors for reflection" to take into account.

### Agreement With U.S. Company for Oil Exploration

LD2411211692 Algiers ENTV Television Network  
in Arabic 1900 GMT 24 Nov 92

[Text] An agreement was signed this evening at Djenane El Mithaq [in Algiers] between Sonatrach [National Company for the Transport and Marketing of Hydrocarbons] and an American company for the exploration for oil and natural gas; Fouzia Dadi reports:

[Dadi] For five years, Sonatrach and the American Louisiana Land and Exploration Company will be exploring for oil and natural gas. The exploration operation will be in two areas: the first area, called Ouled Nsar, covers an area of some 4,000 sq km and is located 120 km south of Hassi Messaoud [southern Algeria] and 50 km east west [as heard] of El Gassi. As for the second, called Menzel Lejmet, it covers an area of more than 2,000 sq km, and it is located at a distance of 240 km southeast of Hassi Messaoud. The cost of the agreement will reach \$33 million for the American side over five years, and in accordance with this agreement, the American company will take charge of all the investments. The agreement also provides for the training of the Sonatrach cadres in the domain of exploration and search for oil.

For your information, this agreement is the 25th of its kind with American companies, and the first to be concluded with the Louisiana Land and Exploration Company.

### Energy Cooperation With Venezuela Discussed

93AF0233C Algiers ALGER REPUBLICAIN in French  
15 Nov 92 p 3

[Text] A group of Venezuelan energy officials will begin a series of discussions with their Algerian counterparts in Algiers on Saturday. They will examine ways of coordinating the two countries' oil and gas strategies and the erosion of the world oil market.

According to a source close to the Algerian Energy Ministry, the two countries, both of which are pursuing similar policies favoring partnerships with international oil companies to redeploy their oil and gas activities, will have to "work together to define possible areas of cooperation" based on their respective experiences. A preliminary exchange of views took place when an Algerian delegation visited Caracas in June.

Algeria's energy minister, Mr. Hacene Mefti, has recommended that the areas in which the two countries can "quickly launch a cooperative effort" be identified.

Venezuela is known for its experience in downstream petroleum industries. It has developed a diversified petrochemical industry at home while, on the international level, the oil company PDVSA [Venezuelan Petroleum, Inc.] has become an effective player in the realm of refining and distribution activities.

Algeria, for its part, brings to the discussions its new strategy in upstream industries based on a far-reaching modification of its laws one year ago, as well as its

confirmed experience in the production and marketing of natural gas. This last point seems to be of keen interest to Venezuela, which is preparing an ambitious program to develop its natural gas reserves.

The two delegations are also to engage in "consultations on the world energy situation, in particular the erosion of the basic parameters of the international petroleum market which has created a downward pressure on prices."

Algeria and Venezuela are members of OPEC, which is scheduled to hold biannual meeting in Vienna on 25 November.

### Italy Extends Industrial Cooperation to PMIs

93AF0233D Algiers ALGER REPUBLICAIN in French  
11 Nov 92 p 3

[Text] Italy and Algeria have long enjoyed a relationship of bilateral cooperation in industrial partnerships. Italy believes firmly in such collaboration and that belief is evident not only in the great interest that Italian companies such as ENI and FIAT have taken in Algeria, but also in the growing presence of small and medium-sized Italian companies in the Algerian economy. Several small and medium-sized Italian manufacturers have found reliable Algerian partners with production facilities amenable to being reorganized and relaunched, as well as efficient workforces. The positive experience of small and medium-sized Italian companies in Algeria has led the governments of the two countries to create an ad hoc program to promote small and medium-sized industries [PMIs] by making available 40 billion lire in credit on concessional terms to finance the capital and technical requirements of Algerian industries in their efforts to improve performance, and to promote collaboration with their Italian counterparts.

The program was created and designed by the Italian foreign affairs ministry, Algeria's delegate ministry for small and medium-sized industries, the National Chamber of Commerce in Algiers, the Italian Foreign Trade Institute, the Algerian Development Bank, and Popular Credit of Algeria. It provides for the financing of a number of projects, none of which should exceed 3 billion lire. The assistance program is intended to ensure that small and medium-sized Algerian companies have access to bank credit on the most favorable terms possible. This will allow them to import the equipment, tools, and supplies required for their operations, to benefit from new technologies and from production and distribution methods that will enable them to spur production and establish the training, technical support, and management programs they need in order to improve output.

The primary criteria used in selecting projects eligible for financing are to ensure a distribution of projects among the priority sectors of the Algerian economy, particularly the sectors most likely to create jobs; to guide investment

towards areas in which Italian firms have proven expertise; and to ensure that the private sector is well represented.

The projects selected thus far have been spread out over a fairly wide range of sectors, including textiles, the steel industry, metallurgy, electronics, food processing, construction materials, plastics, chemicals, glass making, the leather and shoe industry, and construction and public works.

### 'Trabendo,' Drugs Said Financing FIS in France

93AF0233A Algiers ALGER REPUBLICAIN in French  
13-14 Nov 92 p 3

[Text] Revelations about the activities of Algerian fundamentalists in France and the support they receive there continue to appear in the press. On Thursday, 11 November, the French daily newspaper LIBERATION reported illegal dealing in a variety of goods by Algerian Islamists in France. It appears that "trabendo" [contraband], fake Lacostes, and drug trafficking are a source of financing for the FIS [Islamic Salvation Front] and other Islamist organizations.

LIBERATION reported Thursday that, according to sources in the French police, 5,000 young Algerians have entered France in the past eight months "to engage in trabendo."

The young Algerians, termed "Islamist traffickers" and "FIS sympathizers" by the newspaper, are reported to have connections with merchants who are "close to the Islamists," which would indicate that "Algerian Islamists are implicated in these networks."

LIBERATION writes that despite a "marked tightening" in the number of visas granted by the French authorities to Algerians (400,000 in 1992 compared with 800,000 in 1991, according to the French foreign affairs ministry), the young dealers "curiously" manage to gain entry into France. It cites one young Algerian who, "even before leaving the Algiers airport with a ticket and false papers in hand, had been given detailed directions to help him find his way in Paris—the name of a hotel, the name of the sponsor to contact..."

"Do the organizers and participants in the contraband belong to any particular clan in the Algerian Islamist fraternity?" asks LIBERATION. It cites the discovery by the police on 14 October of sales of fake Lacostes in which Qamareddine Kherbane and Boudjema Bounoua, "two leaders of the FIS hard-line faction," were implicated, both of whom had been expelled from France in August for posing a "threat to law and order."

LIBERATION reports that the young Algerians, when not dealing in the clothing traffic, deal in drugs that are "gaining ground" on the streets of the Barbes district.

The article goes on to describe another category of young Algerians who leave home for France. They are "university graduates in search of a safe place in French universities." At the University of Paris VIII, notes LIBERATION, professors are uneasy about the influx of

applications from Algerians "seeking to enter departments that are not even remotely related to their previous fields of study." Many of them express interest in education but most hold "licences" [bachelor degrees] in science.

"When they speak freely, these applicants describe how difficult it is for them to find jobs in Algeria and claim that they are ready to start over and begin new lives," the newspaper writes.

#### **FIS Presence in France Said 'Exaggerated'**

93AF0237E Algiers EL WATAN in French  
22 Nov 92 p 2

[Article by A. Hayane: "Algerian Associations in France: 'Report on FIS Is Exaggerated'"—first paragraph is EL WATAN introduction]

[Text] The French Ministry of Interior report concerning the dissolved FIS [Islamic Salvation Front] presence on French territory is not, it appears, as accurate as French intelligence services led us to believe.

At any rate, this is the opinion shared by political and apolitical Algerian associations operating in France. Some of them have been established for quite some time, and therefore are sufficiently familiar with the Algerian immigration "ground" to be able to outline its political contours; all point out that the report is "somewhat too much exaggerated." The FIS type of organization in the suburbs of large French town that is described in the report is puzzling. According to Mr. Abdelkader Raffed, president of the Federation of Algerian Associations in France (FAAF, apolitical) headquartered in Nancy (in eastern France, a region that traditionally has a high density of Algerian immigrants), "there is nothing to enable anyone to say that the FIS is very active in France. True, here and there, a few individuals known of all have proclaimed themselves FIS representatives. Strictly speaking, there is no true base for a genuine organization, and political work is rather individual."

Mr. Raffed told us that the only halfway credible FIS representation is the FAF association (Algerian Brotherhood in France) which, however, he credits with only a very small audience among Algerian immigrants.

"You know, here, Islam is not just Algerian; there are many nationalities. Long before the FIS emerged, any attempt at mixing politics into religion automatically met with rejection because there is such a multitude of races and ethnic groups, and therefore social and political views," the FAAF president explained.

Mr. Raffed's conclusion concerning the report was that "if its goal is to blame all religious activities, we strongly denounce it."

For his part, Mr. Zoheir Rouis, president of the PRA Immigration Association, the official representative in France of Nourredine Boukrouh's Algerian Renewal Party [PRA], said that the FIS was attempting to gain control of second-generation "beurs" [French citizens

born in France of Arab immigrant parents]. "This category of Algerians lack sociological reference points, due to the fact that they failed to integrate—although it is true that such integration would be unnatural, decided on their behalf by the authorities, as they are torn between their North African origins and their daily life which is completely westernized; as a result some young people have found in the FIS an answer to their social frustrations. The FIS, or its few representatives here, gained ground through a nearly religious preliminary approach before going over into politics," he said.

On the other hand, Mr. Rouis believes that the FIS presence is not impressive. "You do not meet them in the field," he explained, wondering also why this presence was overestimated overseas.

"What is clear, is that the French press is playing an important part in the present situation. It would seem that there is a veritable offensive on its part, the objectives of which are still hard to make out. Is it because elections are getting near that they are now brandishing the security card? Is it, in fact, a French Government's reversal of its policy toward the FIS? In that case, it would throw back into question France's position with respect to Algeria's internal problems."

For the RCD-Immigration [Rally for Culture and Democracy], the statements of the French press, which analyzed the report, are "vastly exaggerated and overestimate the FIS structures and role in France."

The RCD thus asks the same questions, namely whether the publication of the French intelligence services report is "an attempt on the part of the French Government to clear its name and distance itself from a one-way political line benefiting the FIS and against Algeria." Or else is it, once again, "that the forthcoming legislative elections prompt the socialist government to play the security card to counter the right-wing opposition, whose favorite theme it has been for a very long time."

#### **Regional Affairs**

#### **FIS Radio Destroyed; Khartoum Support Seen**

93AF0237F Algiers EL WATAN in French  
16 Nov 92 p 5

[Article by A. Hayane: "'Saout El-Wafa': Radio Transmitter Destroyed"—first paragraph is EL WATAN introduction]

[Text] According to some reports, the Islamic Salvation Front's (dissolved FIS) pirate radio, which used to broadcast on the FM band in the greater Algiers area, has been located and destroyed by security forces.

The station called "Saout El-Wafa" (loyalty radio) started broadcasting last 6 August and could be heard for 15 to 20 minutes every Wednesday between 1600 and 1800.

The station repeated the FIS main slogans and excerpts from Ali Benhadj's and Abassi Madani's sermons.

It also served as a relay for the propaganda of Chebouti, the head of the Armed Islamic Movement (MIA), who denounced the government, called for jihad, and spoke on behalf of the FIS on all of the government's political or security initiatives. Having withdrawn to the Algiers area where he is hunted down by the police, and thus unable to travel, Chebouti probably sent his messages through short recordings broadcast by "Saout El-Wafa." The police used helicopters and air forces to locate the clandestine radio transmitter.

In addition, according to the British weekly *THE EUROPEAN*, the FIS leaders who are still free are about to set up a radio station to broadcast their propaganda from Sudan to Algeria.

#### **Khartoum's Support?**

"The FIS has reached an advanced stage in its negotiations with Dr. Hassan Tourabi (the Sudanese fundamentalists' leader and Sudanese government's eminence grise) concerning the creation of a radio station in Khartoum," *THE EUROPEAN* indicated in its last issue, recalling that "Sudan provides paramilitary support to Algerian fundamentalists."

The loss of "Saout El-Wafa" probably made the FIS realize how vital it is to have a permanent radio station based abroad, far beyond reach of the police.

There remains to be seen whether the Khartoum government will endorse the project implementation.

If that were the case, Sudan too, like Iran and France, would have taken another step in interfering in Algeria's internal affairs.

#### **Internal Affairs**

##### **Abdesselam's Accusations of Press 'Serious'**

93AF0237D Algiers *LIBERTE* in French 23 Nov 92 p 3

[Article by Ahmed Fattani: "Aggression"]

[Text] Serious, very serious were the accusations that Mr. Belaid Abdesselam made Saturday evening on ENTV [National Television Enterprise] television against the independent press. The prime minister engaged in a veritable attack against a sector that actually has always supported him in his mission. So far, no newspaper has departed from the sacrosanct rule of participating in the defense of the nation's higher interests. Journalists from the independent press have honorably met their obligations to the nation. What gives anyone the right to lecture us on patriotism?

You do not have to be a genius to guess that if Mr. Abdesselam decided to act so defensively it was in order to "clear his name" with public opinion in the wake of Mr. Mahi Bahi's dismissal.

Unanimously, the independent press condemned Mr. Abdesselam's sudden decision to dismiss his justice minister from the government.

This being said, the present prime minister has just lost the support of the independent press, which had been invaluable until now. When he attacked the independent press, he lost an ally that would have carried weight in the battles which—given time—the prime minister intends to undertake in the future.

Instead of strengthening the domestic front, Abdesselam broke it. Worse still, he aroused the suspicions, and lost the support of large segments of civil society and the media.

In other words, and if we follow the prime minister's reasoning, there remain in Algeria only two enemies to tackle: the FIS [Islamic Salvation Front] and the independent press.

The analogy even extends to semantics. He did use words like foreigners, treason, spy, corruption, to pillory the independent press which is today the Algerians' pride.

Last time, when he met with the UGTA [General Union of Algerian Workers], Abdesselam already said: "A politician must repeat himself or contradict himself. As for me, I repeat myself." Last Saturday evening, he showed indeed that he has not changed a bit as far as his political vision of Algeria is concerned. He is a dyed-in-the-wool conservative. His Stalin-like accusations against the independent press stirred up the old demons of inquisition of the dark times of Boumediene, one of whose invaluable assistants he was.

Actually, there was no justification for Mr. Abdesselam's regrettable outburst, and it can only be a political blunder. Words like treason and spies, coming from a prime minister, cannot fail to carry serious connotations. They must be warranted. And unless they are, they are tantamount to libel.

Heading the government of a state calls for a certain reserve.

Now that the damage is done, the government must act quickly. If there are "black sheep" in the Algerian press, the government must denounce them. The HCE [Higher State Council] must decide on the need to appoint an investigation commission to find out whether Abdesselam's allegations are true.

Is the prime minister so ignorant of the fact that we are self-supporting?

If our press prospers compared with the public-sector press, the secret of its success is due essentially to its professionalism. We challenge him to audit our accounts! Our books are open to the internal revenue service and to the authorities. Anything to ensure transparency. If the independent press has managed the amazing feat of pleasing public opinion, it is quite simply because its message is credible.

The obedient press for which Mr. Abdesselam is longing is dead and buried. The development of the independent press is one of the achievements of democracy and the Algerian people. It is a fact of life.

When Abdesselam took the independent press in his sights, he attacked the right to information and thereby seriously challenged the Constitution, which guarantees freedom of speech. In the ends, perhaps he should just reflect on the proverb: Reputations shape reactions.

Abdesselam can do anything. He can decree anything to kill the press. But whatever he may do will be arbitrary. This is something that history will remember.

### Political 'Crisis' Said 'Intensifying'

93AF0237B Algiers EL WATAN in French  
19 Nov 92 p 1

[Commentary by Tayeb Belghiche: "Deadlock"]

[Text] At a time when terrorism tends to decline appreciably, the political crisis is paradoxically getting conspicuously worse, like the turmoil that just affected the justice sector. Say what you like, this turmoil was the result of an eminently political affair, which also created quite a stir in public opinion.

The public is already disenchanted by what it sees every day. So are political parties, which seem to be getting very unobtrusive, even self-effacing.

The RPN [National Patriotic Rally], which aroused many hopes in a large segment of society, is plagued by dissensions.

The political deadlock is total and the ever-present crisis is getting worse, while economic conditions are extremely gloomy.

Present-day Algerian history is a succession of crises.

The Revolution of 1 November 1954 became possible only after a serious crisis took place within the nationalist movement.

This crisis led to a break with the past and triggered the liberation mechanism.

Other disruptions affected the country, e.g., the war between interior forces and forces on the border that followed the attainment of independence, in June 1965 and, above all, in October 1988. Each time, crises proved fecund while despair was at its highest.

It is true that the difficult times in which we are living are made worse by terrorism. Other convulsions cannot be ruled out. Does the country have what it takes to withstand future blows? The manner in which the present crisis is managed will be decisive. But it will require all of the country's energy.

### Political Parties React to Press Criticism

93AF0237C Algiers EL WATAN in French  
23 Nov 92 p 5

[Article by Hamid Tahri: "Belaid Abdesselam Is Going Too Far"—first paragraph is EL WATAN introduction]

[Text] The prime minister's television appearance, the day before yesterday, did not provide the long-awaited

answers addressing current political and economic concerns; he merely engaged in a violent indictment of the independent press and remained evasive on the burning questions of the hour. This, in substance, is what emerges from the parties' first statements.

Mr. Bencherif (PNSD [National Party for Solidarity and Development]) firmly denounced "Mr. Abdesselam's statements, which verged on libel as far as the terms used are concerned (treason, corruption)."

"The independent press is the last island of democracy in the country; it must be preserved at all costs.

"The prime minister's interventionist and bureaucratic tendencies will not serve his plan of action." Mr. Bencherif added that "public opinion has nothing to hope from the state-owned press because it is gagged and controlled by the government. Television is the most enlightening example of this. All partners in democracy have a duty to defend the freedom of the press as well as the independence of Justice."

For its part, the RCD [Rally for Culture and Democracy] declared itself "surprised by the prime minister's analysis of the economic situation; he was not convincing and shoved aside the reserve inherent in his office when he violently attacked the 'private press,' which he abusively and unfairly compared to a mercenary enterprise living off scandals."

"Shouldn't we interpret the absence of independent journalists on this program as a determination to exclude them from any communication strategy," the RCD asked, adding that "mentioning the recovery of State property raises more problems than it can answer."

"Mr. Abdesselam seemed rather anxious to appease the fears of the former single party." As far as the RCD is concerned, it already declared itself in favor of "recovering all movable or real property belonging to the State."

In addition, the PRA [Algerian Renewal Party] "wondered why the prime minister kept mentioning the results of the 26 December elections while continuing to deny the benefit of these results to the first of those that worked to achieve them, i.e., the FIS [Islamic Salvation Front]."

In another register, concerning the independent press which Mr. Abdesselam blamed for all our problems, the PRA takes offence at the "statements made, characterized by hatred for, and an obsession with everything that is private, and estimates that they would warrant a libel lawsuit and, at any rate, are unworthy of an official in charge of public interests."

For his part, Mr. Allalou, president of the APUA [expansion not given], noted contradictions in the prime minister's statements, saying that "the only parties are those who are currently negotiating with the HCE [Higher High Council]. For the prime minister, the other parties

are just very small groups. We thank him for the compliment and consider that these are things that are not pleasant to hear."

As for the press, "which must be the cradle of democracy in self-respecting countries," Mr. Allalou added, "we can only encourage it." According to the APUA official, "Mr. Abdesselam's acerbic criticism of the independent press is uncalled for. There are two solutions: either the independent press, and political parties with it, must keep quiet, or it will denounce. It cannot stand in between."

### A Blunder

For its part, the National Association for the Development of Market Economy [ADEM], through its president, Dr. Mebtoul, protested the new provisions affecting the construction, public works, and housing sector, which go against market economy principles, and he deplored the prime minister's statements "accusing the private press of having recourse to treason and corruption, and simultaneously praising the state-owned press for its nationalism. This approach discriminates among operators and is an attack against freedom of thought and creation, which brings us back to the anesthesia of the cultural process."

The ADEM, the communique concluded, "gives its support to the independent and private press."

In some of its headlines, the independent press strongly reacted to Mr. Belaid Abdesselam's statements. For instance, in his editorial, Mr. Zoubir Souissi, editor of *LE SOIR D'ALGERIE*, mentioned Mr. Belaid Abdesselam's serious accusations against the independent press.

"He does not pull his punches to settle the independent press which, for him, is not independent in any way. According to the prime minister, it is a private press which owes its survival to libel, treason, spying, the forces of money, foreign interests, and corruption, to mention just a few (...)."

"But let's come back to the prime minister's blunder—the word is not too strong: by making such serious accusations, he attacked a whole corporation and the integrity of hundreds of men and women who work in this trade. In this respect, Belaid Abdesselam engages in the very practice he denounced, namely libel."

Lumping people together and labelling them are unworthy methods. We must discard bureaucratic stereotyped language and put it away with other unpleasant memories. Governments change, the press remains to face its readers. This, the editor of *LE SOIR D'ALGERIE* concluded, is the essential.

As for the daily *L'OPINION*, it devoted a lot of room to Belaid Abdesselam's televised appearance.

On the subject of the press, Mr. Bachir Rezzoug noted that, when the prime minister mentioned it, he got angry and revived a few old grudges.

"To say that the state-owned press is high-minded, and that the independent, and obviously private, press aims low and puts up with the shackles that are the result of sensationalism, is to be a bit too quick off the mark and to take some rather steep shortcuts."

### Response to Suspension of Justice Minister

93AF0237A Algiers *EL WATAN* in French  
16 Nov 92 p 3

[Article by Faycal Metaoui: "Incomprehensible Decision"—first paragraph is *EL WATAN* introduction]

[Text] Disapproval and outrage at the Algiers law courts following the HCE [Higher State Council] decision to suspend Mr. Mahi-Bahi, the justice minister, from office.

"I think it's gauche. You don't suspend a public prosecutor in a capital city that easily, and you don't ax a minister with such ease. It's not serious. There is too much precipitation on both sides. How can a government repudiate a minister that it appointed itself? Personally, I think it's a farce," Mr. Guecha, attorney, pointed out, adding: "I think that decisions like that are a serious blow to the judicial institution. You don't correct one mistake by making another one. If decisions are required, they should be made with tact and wisdom, even if it is to fight corruption."

Mr. Hamidi Khodja, whom we met on the law courts stairway, gave his impressions as an attorney: "You know, we are living in a time of suspensions. Newspapers, ministers, magistrates, to mention just these, get suspended. The decision to dismiss Mr. Mahi-Bahi was too precipitated. Decisions like that should not be made in a hurry; they must be considered well. In my opinion, this type of behavior will merely widen the gap between the people and the government. This decision makes you wonder. It does not look well reasoned or well thought out. But we should recognize that the position of justice minister is a position of sovereignty." He thinks that the state is taken too lightly.

"It worries me. Decisions must be given credence," he exclaimed.

Another attorney, who asked not to be named, agreed with him: "Mr. Mahi-Bahi was the supreme head of the public prosecutor's department; he was fully entitled to suspend magistrates. Personally, I believe that it is an injustice to dismiss him. As soon as someone starts doing his job right, they stop him. Eventually, it becomes outrageous. In this country, we are losing too much time. Restoring the situation will require speed and efficiency. In my opinion, decisions of this type serve nobody. I don't believe that Mr. Mahi-Bahi made any mistake, because the decision to suspend some justice department employees was motivated by the results of commission work. It is actually the outcome of an investigation," he stated.

That attorney wondered about the fact that the creation of a position of minister-adviser on legal affairs resulted



in "duality with the post of justice minister. We no longer know who is in charge of what," he estimated.

As for Mr. Touati, president of the Algiers court, he stated that he had no comment on the decision: "My present position does not allow me to give my impressions concerning decisions made at other levels." This was also the Algiers court public prosecutor's position.

"The right [sic] of reserve prevents me from commenting on decisions that fall outside my sphere of activity," he stated.

It is strange to note that all women attorneys whom we asked for their impressions on the decision to suspend the justice minister refrained from making statements.

Some argued that the Bar imposed a right [sic] of reserve upon them. Is that true only of female attorneys? One of these blackrobed women told us, sotto voce, that the decision was motivated by purely political considerations, and that, "assuming this is the case, this suspension is none of my business."

We tried, but in vain, to obtain the views of the Algiers court president. We were given to understand in the corridors that it would be useless to insist, "no one will talk to you."

#### **HCE Addresses Struggle Against Terrorism**

*LD1012234592 Algiers APS in English 1335 GMT  
10 Dec 92*

[Text] Algiers 10/12/92 (APS)—Struggle against terrorism answers to a global strategy apprehending this problem under all its security, social and cultural aspects. The main lines of this strategy can spring from the Higher State Council (HCE) and the government statements. The higher political instance of the country and the executive expressed on many occasions their firm determination not to yield to blackmail and terror and to work in order to make the state fully recover its authority and rehabilitate its institutions. On the ground, security forces adjusted their methods to this new kind of criminality which is terrorism. These measures were consolidated on the juridical plan by the promulgation of the legislative decree relating to the struggle against subversion and terrorism which provides notably for setting up special jurisdictions. The state action is more resolute at the security plan as the advocates of terrorism especially officials and militants of dissolved Islamic Front of Salvation (FIS) have been identified as well as their supporters acting under the banner of elected assemblies, trade-union leagues and other cultural and charitable associations.

Ali Kafi, president of the Higher State Council, affirmed that everybody in society must feel concerned by the struggle against terrorism. He also underlined that the HCE and the government work in collaboration with living forces of the country for recovering public order and security. It is worth recalling that the president of the HCE called, at the opening of the judicial year, citizens to take part in the struggle against terrorism in order to

"preserve society and the future of the country." On his turn, the head of government declared during a meeting held recently with eight heads of provinces of the center of the country, that "citizens understanding and assistance" were necessary to struggle efficiently against terrorism.

"The government works for fighting against social injustice and taking in charge problems of the marginalized strata of the population" interior minister, Mohamed Hardi, declared during the installation of the new head of province of Oran (420 km west of Algiers). Among measures taken by the government in favour of these strata, Hardi cited the maintaining of social housing programs, the follow up of support of large consumption products prices, the nondevaluation of the dinar, the creation of jobs within local collectivities, the taxation on fortune and the principle of national solidarity. Interior minister also indicated that the government's action does not only aim at abolishing armed groups but aims at treating the problem in its source. Hardi estimated that it is necessary to review teaching methods of educational programs.

#### **Crime Rate 'Up' as Police Focus on 'Terrorists'**

*93AF0199A Algiers LE SOIR D'ALGERIE in French  
21 Oct 92 p 3*

[Article by Slimane Bensaihi: "Banditry: Caught by the Police"; first two paragraphs are LE SOIR D'ALGERIE introduction]

[Text] Charged with breaking up terrorist groups that have sworn to bring fire and bloodshed to Algeria, the security forces have relaxed their vigilance, to some extent, against common-law crimes.

This situation has made it possible for the small fry of crime to increase their ferocity, endangering the peaceful lives of ordinary citizens, who no longer venture into isolated areas out of fear of paying for the voracious appetites of these parasites.

Algiers (LE SOIR D'ALGERIE)—Petty gunmen, thieves on the run, and traffickers in drugs and other narcotics are taking advantage of the present situation and finding it helpful for carrying out their evil purposes.

The proverb that says, "When the cat's away, the mice play," describes better than any other possible way a situation that had gone on only too long.

Taking the situation in hand once again, the police services charged with seeing to the security of the ordinary citizens have just distinguished themselves by two dragnet operations, which made it possible to put two gangs of criminals out of business.

For example, and according to reports confirmed by APS, a group of criminals who specialized in holding up motorists with knives have just fallen into a trap set by gendarmes in the province of Tizi-Ouzou.

Operating in the Beni Zmenzer region, near a place called "Aglagal," this gang of four persons, one of them

a minor, forced motorists, at knife point, to turn over valuable objects, including automobile radios, money, jewels, etc.

After they were arrested, all of these individuals were taken to the public prosecutor, who ordered two of them placed under arrest, while the other two were released on bail. In Tlemcen, another trap should be credited to members of the regional service for the fight against narcotics. They have just arrested a man called "Boubou" and S.A. (26 years old) and F.A. (32 years old), two of his accomplices. They were engaged in growing, trafficking, and consuming cannabis and cannabis resin.

A search made at the home of S.A. led to the discovery of cannabis seeds intended for planting in the forest of Ouzidan in the area outside Tlemcen. It should be noted that the traffic in cannabis seeds is something new in this province. The charges against these individuals were presented to the public prosecutor, who ordered them imprisoned.

Elsewhere, and in the province of Bordj Bou Arreridj in particular, a substantial traffic in gold has been uncovered, involving 293 pieces of gold jewelry (bracelets, chains, medallions, etc).

The valuable gold pieces were discovered at a roadblock set up on 17 October and which made it possible to seize this "shipment" in the trunk of a person from Batna who was unable to provide a receipt or explanations regarding the origins of this merchandise.

The person charged with this violation of the law has been put in prison. In the same locality four persons charged with robbing a pharmacy have been arrested and put in prison.

These individuals allegedly stole four containers of 20 tablets each of Diazepan, a product used as a tranquilizer and as a drug, which they intended to resell for 50 Algerians dinars per tablet.

This resumption of activity by the police services and the gendarmerie leads one to anticipate that they will really take the situation in hand so that it will no longer be possible for these bad characters to disturb the peaceful life of citizens shaken by terrorist activities.

#### **Response to 'Terrorism' Said Shameful**

*93AF0233E Algiers ALGER REPUBLICAIN in French  
12 Nov 92 p 3*

[Statement by the Association of Retired National Security Employees of the West: "Silence Is Shameful"]

[Text] "In the face of terrorism, which takes a daily toll of victims among employees of the security forces, defenseless citizens, and civil servants, the silence of a segment of the political and independent press is a disgrace to a people once known around the world for their bravery, courage, and committed stands," writes the Association of Retired National Security Employees of the Western Governorates in a communique.

The association declares that "the seemingly inordinate amount of time being taken to bring the terrorists to justice and the failure to carry out sentences that have already been meted out offer encouragement to these assassins to continue with impunity their obstinate and willful attacks against everything that represents law and order."

"The wait-and-see attitude of the government," the statement continues, "threatens to lend credence in our minds to rumors of mediation that have been circulating for some time and have been echoed by certain press organizations."

The association's communique adds that "these assertions, which have not been denied, and appeals for dialogue, which place the victims and the assassins on an equal footing, have caused us justifiable concern and definite alarm for the morale of our active duty colleagues in the various services who may conclude that their sacrifice is futile and their service in vain."

"The situation has become intolerable and threatens to trigger uncontrollable reactions. For that reason, to continue to wait is to participate directly in these crimes and to share responsibility for them with their perpetrators," the communique concludes.

#### **Update on Detainees Held in Security Centers**

*93AF0190B Algiers EL WATAN in French  
31 Oct 92 p 4*

[Article signed R.N.: "Security Centers; Closed Within One Month"—first paragraph is EL WATAN introduction]

[Text] After the Reggane and El-Homr security centers, a third center, Tiberghamine in the Adrar wilayah, was just closed, the APS announced, quoting a reliable source.

Ninety-eight percent of the 400 people detained in this center, 50 km north of Adrar, have been released; the others were transferred to another center. Now that the Tiberghamine center is closed, there remains only one security center in the Adrar wilayah, the Tsabit center, also 50 km from Adrar, and its inmates will soon be released.

Thus, 1,000 people were released from security centers in recent weeks, Mr. Rezzag-Bara, president of the National Human Rights Observatory (ONDH), told the APS.

According to Mr. Rezzag-Bara, only 1,500 to 1,600 individuals now remain in these centers. This figure contrasts strongly with the figure published by the authorities in February 1992, soon after the proclamation of the state of emergency, which mentioned some 9,000 detainees. As is known, the number of detainees hovered around 4,000 last May. In September, only 2,800 were left, as another 1,200 had been released following the HCE [Higher State Council] decision of 8 August 1992 to close security centers "progressively."

For Mr. Rezzag-Bara, "the situation (administrative detention and existence of security centers) poses a human rights problem and remains a source of concern for the ONDH," despite the reassuring announcement of these new releases. "The security center monitoring cell that we have organized tries to obtain as many releases as possible from the administration, and we are applying pressure to have these centers closed," he said. We have learned that, within one month, all security centers will be closed, except the Ouargla center, where people who have committed crimes or acts of terrorism will be detained.

### **Refugee Influx in Tamanrasset Forces Census**

93AF0190C Algiers ALGER REPUBLICAIN in French  
21 Oct 92 p 1

[Article signed M. M.: "General Population Census in Tamanrasset; Who Is Who?"]

[Text] A general census of the population living on the territory of the Tamanrasset wilayah started Saturday throughout the 10 communities of the wilayah. This APS report gives an inkling of the exceptional character of the situation in the Deep South; a general census is a difficult and costly operation that is rarely organized on the territory of a single wilayah. But this is an exceptional situation.

The census—made necessary by the tensions that prevail in the region—seems to be part of a plan to restore law and order in the Ahaggar. In fact, a whole series of measures were decided during Mr. M'Hamed Tolba, the minister delegate to public security's visit to the region.

When he met the HCE [Higher State Council] president, Hadj Akhamokh, who is considered as the most influential notable in the region, expressed the local people's concern as to security conditions. Hadj Akhamokh and several other Tamanrasset citizens consider that insecurity is caused by the massive influx of (mostly illegal) foreigners. They probably meant militants from rebel movements in Niger and Mali. The latter, of course, dispute these and put the blame on bandits over which "liberation movements" have no control whatsoever. A general population census will at least make it possible to determine exactly how many foreigners live in the Tamanrasset wilayah (and what is their citizenship). Actually, no one has yet been able to determine how many foreigners there were. To date, official sources have mentioned 10,000; other sources quote figures two or three times as high.... But how credible can these figures be when, depending on the source, they range from 2,000 to 8,000 for the same refugee camp. The census will also make it possible to evaluate the logistic and financial means required for a return of the foreigners to their countries of origin. In fact, during his visit to Algiers, President Konare mentioned aid from Algeria, in particular means of transport, to repatriate Malians under the national pact signed by the government and the Touareg movements in the Azawad.

Among these considerations relating to population movements, the census can be expected to help better define the question of "citizenship" in these Deep South territories, and achieve better control over movements of (often illicit) goods.

The general census may represent an arduous task, because the terrain is rugged and because Tamanrasset, and therefore Algeria, attract many people on the continent. However, since the Sahara, as a source of energy, is coveted by many foreign agencies, it is essential to maintain control over the region.

### **Citizens in Support of RPN Form Committee**

93AF0190D Algiers ALGER REPUBLICAIN in French  
26 Oct 92 p 3

[Statement of the National Sponsorship Committee for the National Patriotic Rally (RPN), with an introduction signed S.T.: "Looking for Stability"]

[Text]

#### **[Introduction]**

The creation of a committee to sponsor the National Patriotic Rally [RPN] was announced yesterday by Mr. Bouchaib, a committee member and president of the commission investigating Boudiaf's assassination.

The many journalists (including foreign press correspondents) who expected a press conference had to make do with the Sponsorship Committee's statement that was read to them.

In a brief speech, Mr. Bouchaib said that the objective of the committee is to "continue Kaid Mohamed Boudiaf's efforts to build a strong and modern country."

He took this opportunity to appeal to "all citizens, civil society, and associations" to rally around the RPN in order to "implement the project" of the late president.

Mr. Allal, also a member of the investigation commission, then read the Sponsorship Committee's statement.

Note that Mr. Allal added that the list of committee members was not yet closed.

The committee initiators no doubt meant this as an invitation to the political committee which, in a statement made yesterday, expressed its uneasiness concerning the procedure followed.

#### **Sponsorship Committee Statement**

On 16 January 1992, all Algerians discovered, or rediscovered, a man who had remained almost forgotten for 30 years.

In the weeks that followed, the ideals of 1 November [1954] that he and his companions embodied, assumed new strength and topicality.

More forceful for being expressed in simple and direct terms, his ideas enabled Algerians to redefine their identity and recover confidence and hope, all of which was expressed in the slogan: "Algeria above all."

The circumstances surrounding his sudden death and the shock that it caused further contributed to highlight the objectives he had set for himself, which he had defined in his draft RPN platform, and which he had started to implement.

The RPN, which Mohamed Boudiaf wanted to be "a forum to express ourselves, confront our ideas, and participate," "will devote its efforts to integrate young people by mobilizing them to solve their problems and encouraging them to take on all the responsibilities that are theirs in building our country."

The proliferation of RPN support committees throughout the territory and among our fellow citizens abroad revealed the expectations that Mohamed Boudiaf answered, and the receptive attitude that he elicited, especially among the young.

However, although the sincerity of RPN members' intents and feelings is undeniable, it is a fact that opportunists of all kinds have been attempting to manipulate and harness them.

This is why, after consulting, and in agreement with the HCE [Higher State Council], a group of citizens decided to create a National Sponsorship Committee for the National Patriotic Rally.

The objective of the committee is essentially to continue Mohamed Boudiaf's efforts and to answer our people's ardent wish for "a radical break with the practices, methods, and individuals who are the cause of the crisis that the country is experiencing today."

The RPN National Sponsorship Committee has set itself the objective to provide the conditions of reflection and organization required to hold the RPN constitutive congress.

To this end, the National Sponsorship Committee will define and implement a plan of action geared essentially to evaluating, coordinating, and promoting the movement, and to initiating a broad debate around the draft platform.

The National Sponsorship Committee's mission will end when the RPN national conference meets.

The Algerians—men and women—will then have the instrument needed to take part in the construction of democracy and a modern society open to progress.

The National Sponsorship Committee consists of 45 charter members, and the national executive bureau consists of 19 members.

Algiers, 25 October 1992

Temporary address: B. P. 384 EL-Mouradia, Algiers

#### **Members of the RPN National Sponsorship Committee Executive Bureau**

1. Ammour Abdelkader
2. Aslaoui Leila
3. Barki Aicha
4. Benhabyles Saida
5. Bouabdelli Ayad

6. Bouchaib Ahmed
7. Boutine Mohamed
8. Chaib-Cherif Brahim
9. Djellouli Embarka
10. Guerroudj Abdelkader
11. Hattabi Sid-Ali
12. Hendel Youcef
13. Lounici Ali
14. Lounis Ammar
15. Manosouri Hady
16. Moussaoui Mohamed Saddek
17. Thaalbi Tayeb
18. Thaminy Abdellah
19. Tlemsani Mahmoud

#### **Charter Members of the RPN National Sponsorship Committee**

1. Ait-Mouheb Khaled
2. Ammour Abdelkader
3. Aroua Abderrazak
4. Aslaoui Leila
5. Atala Mohamed
6. Barki Aicha
7. Bekair El Horma
8. Belazoug Othmane
9. Belai Mohamed 1
10. Benhabyles Saida
11. Bouabdallah Rachid
12. Bouabdelli Ayad
13. Bouard Brahim
14. Bouchaib Ahmed
15. Bouchema Ammar
16. Boutine Mohamed
17. Chaib-Cherif Brahim
18. Djaboub Kheireddine
19. Djellouli Embarka
20. Fouhal Abdelaziz
21. Guerroudj Abdelkader
22. Guettouche Cherif
23. Haider Hocine
24. Hattabi Sid-Ali
25. Houas Said
26. Hendel Youcef
27. Khaldi Abdelhamid
28. Lounici Ali
29. Lounis Ammar
30. Mansouri Hady
31. Merad-Boudia Bachir
32. Merdjane Abdeslem
33. Mira Smail
34. Moussaoui Mohamed Saddek
35. Mokadem Said
36. Oughidni Abdelouaheb
37. Oulmi Said
38. Sehaillia Yakoub
39. Souilah Salah
40. Tamache Sadek
41. Thaalbi Tayeb
42. Thaminy Abdellah
43. Tlemsani Mahmoud
44. Zeghidi Mohamed
45. Zeroual Mohamed

### New Import Laws; Categories Detailed

93AF0171B Algiers EL WATAN in French 7 Nov 92  
pp 4-5

[Unattributed article: "New Face for Foreign Trade: Import of Several Products Prohibited"]

[Text] *The government has just issued information on specific procedures relating to imports that were drawn up as part of the implementation of the government's finding last 18 August regarding foreign trade and its financing. Moreover this finding had designated three groups of products whose import would be regulated in the future. The first group includes products considered to be of strategic [importance] and for mass consumption, and whose importation is now subject to a price list.*

*As for products in the second group, they cannot get a hard-currency allowance, whether this be in cash or in credit.*

*Last, the third group includes all those products and merchandise the importation of which is suspended.*

*These measures will most certainly slow down imports considerably but they will have two special advantages: first, they will shift a maximum of resources, especially hard currency, towards sectors that are a priority for development; and second, they will protect certain national production sectors that are threatened by unregulated imports.*

*Furthermore it should be remembered that, in this regard, measures had been taken to suspend imports of textile products, skins and leather as well as exotic fruit.*

*These were measures that were accorded a favorable welcome and acclaimed by businessmen at home, particularly where textiles were concerned.*

*Indeed, public and private companies have always deplored unregulated textile imports. A massive turn to foreign products brought about a serious crisis in that sector and resulted in the loss of thousands of jobs....*

[box, p 4]

### Products Not Eligible for Hard-Currency Cash and Credit

So as to allocate hard currency rationally based on available supplies (cash and lines of credit), in accordance with decisions made by the government, the services of the Ministry of Commerce have just issued the list of products that are not eligible for hard-currency cash and credit. These products may be imported only by using debits in private accounts.

This list includes locksmithing and hardware products, certain types of cranes, harvester-combines, motors, television sets, etc.

### Merchandise Names

- Urea
- Ammonium nitrate
- Glassware for table, kitchen, toilet, and office use, for

use in apartments or other similar use, with the exception of baby bottles.

- Manually operated mechanical appliances used to prepare, package or serve food
- Knives (other than those of the 82.08)
- Razors and blades
- Other cutlery items
- Spoons, forks, and ladles
- Hardware and locksmithing equipment
- Fixed cranes for buildings
- Mobile cranes
- Forklifts
- Harvester-combines
- Percolators and other equipment
- Washing machines
- Electric motors [listed six times in publication]
- Other multiphase A.C. motors that run on not more than 75 watts
- Home electrical appliances
- Regular telephones
- Relays that run on less than 40 amps
- Circuit breakers that run on less than 32-amp switches
- Other contactor equipment that runs on less than 40 amps
- Radio receivers
- Electrical cord for buildings
- Coaxial cables
- Agricultural tractors with 70 CV wheels
- Coaches, buses, and minibuses
- 5T PTC 20T trucks
- PTC 20T trucks
- Home television sets, including kits
- Clocks
- Shoe polish
- Candles, tapers of various kinds, and other similar items
- Envelopes, letter-cards, and postcards
- Refrigerators and freezers for home use [end box]

### Products Subject to a Price List

1. Cereals and cereal byproducts	
1-1.	Cereals
	a) Hard wheat
	b) Soft wheat
	c) Rice
	d) Barley
	e) Corn
1-2.	Cereal byproducts
	a) Semolina
	b) Flour
2. Dry yeast	
3. Legumes	
	a) Lentils
	b) Beans
	c) Chickpeas
	d) Round peas

Products Subject to a Price List (Continued)	
4. Grocery products	
	a) White sugars
	b) Green coffees
	c) Teas
	d) Powdered drinking milk (for adults and children)
	e) Children's flours
5. Items involved in agricultural production	
5-1.	Finished products
	a) Veterinary products
	b) Products used on plants
	c) Fertilizers and trace elements
5-2.	Seeds
	a) Cereals and dry legumes
	b) Fodders
	c) Potatoes, garlic, and onions
	d) Industrial crops
	e) Kitchen garden [seeds]
5-3.	Trees and viticultural plants
5-4.	Breeding stock
5-5.	Birds
	a) Big parentals
	b) Eggs to be hatched
5-6.	Trussing wire
5-7.	Binder twine
5-8.	Materials needed to manufacture feed for livestock
	a) Soy loaves
	b) Methionine
	c) Fish meal
5-9.	Spare parts for agricultural material
6. Pharmaceutical products, instrumentation, and basic material necessary for the practice of medicine and surgery	
7. Construction materials	
	a) Cement
	b) Wood
	c) Reinforcement rods
8. School and university books, scientific and technical journals and brochures	
9. Chloride of lime	
10. Extinguishing powder	
11. Tires	
12. Newsprint	

Strategically important and mass consumption products will continue to enjoy privileged access to hard currency (cash and lines of credit). The aim of importing these products is basically to preserve and develop production and export receipts for hydrocarbons.

Also affected are: the agricultural sector, food, pharmaceutical, and medical products as well as construction materials.

However the government's circular states that cash will be allocated on a priority basis only "to balance foreign credits or halt the effects of increased costs that certain types of financing can generate."

All import operations have been told to run under price lists issued by the administration of the Commerce [Ministry].

As set out in last 18 August's circular, the committee will examine these price lists.

[box, p 5]

#### Merchandise Whose Import Is Suspended

The third category of products issued by the Ministry of Commerce includes suspended products that thus cannot receive any outside financing if they are to be imported. And this applies both under the scheme for resources allocated by the state and hard-currency resources held in private accounts.

Included, for example, are edible meats and offal, fruits, chocolates and other food preparations, household and kitchen items, etc.

- Live animals with the exception of the following:
- Reproductive animals that can sire cattle
- Bird parentals and grand-parentals
- Edible meats and offal
- Fish, shellfish, mollusks, and other aquatic invertebrates
- Milk and milk products, eggs, with the exception of: eggs to be hatched or incubated
- Children's milk and powdered milk
- Butter
- Processed cheese
- Legumes, seedlings, roots and edible tubers with the exception of seeds and seedlings [as published]
- Dried legumes
- Edible fruits
- Oils with the exception of crude oils for use in the food industry
- Meat, fish, or shellfish preparations
- Mollusks or other aquatic invertebrates
- Sugar products without cocoa including white chocolate
- Invert sugar and syrup
- Preparations with a cereal base, starch, fecula or milk flours, pastry products with the exception of products used to feed children
- Preparations of vegetables, fruits, or other plant parts
- Preparations of the sorts used to feed animals

- Chocolate and other food preparations containing cocoa
- Various food preparations with the exception of: composite preparations and concentrated extracts used in the manufacture of soft drinks
- Beverages, alcoholic liquids, and vinegars
- Perfumes and toilet waters
- Beauty and makeup products
- Hair preparations
- Preparations for pre-shave, shaving, and other toilet products
- Soap other than for medical use
- Wallpaper and wall coverings
- Toilet paper, facial tissue, paper napkins, baby diapers, and other items for home use other than those for hospital use
- Account books, notebooks, dividers, albums, and similar items
- Tiles and varnished or enameled paving or covering stones made out of ceramic material, blocks, urinals and other similar fixtures for sanitary use made out of ceramic material
- Glassware and other home items items, personal hygiene or toilet articles made of porcelain
- Glass beads, imitation fine or cultured pearls
- Gas stoves
- Household or home hygiene or toilet articles and their parts made of copper, sponge [as published], gloves, and similar items
- Other aluminum covers excluding the 76.16.10 [sentence as published]
- Lead storage cells of the sorts used to get piston motors started
- Electric stoves
- Microwave ovens
- Other pieces of furniture and their parts
- Home lighting fixtures
- Toys, games, and amusement items
- Chairs with the exception of those of the (94.02) [as published]
- Box mattresses and mattresses [end box]

### **Rising Unemployment; Figures 'Alarming'**

93AF0190A Algiers ALGER REPUBLICAIN in French  
21 Oct 92 p 3

[Article by Cherif Berkache: "Unemployment: Alarming Rise"]

[Text] Algerian unemployment has become alarming in recent years.

The number of job applicants continues to grow whereas the potential number of jobs offered remains the same or even decreases due to staff reductions and layoffs, which have become quite common these days. Times are hard; they are the rotten fruits of an economic crisis that brings the usual troubles, a tribute paid by most of the people.

Already, those who earn a salary hardly manage to make ends meet. What can those do who are not "lucky" enough to have a steady job? The time is past when people looked down on state-owned companies, knowing

that they could always work there as a last resort, if they could not find a job elsewhere, in case of need.

After a decade during which its socio-economic structures fell apart, Algeria—according to the National Statistics Bureau (ONS)—had 1.266 million unemployed in 1991, i.e., 21 percent of the active population. Within one year (from 1990 to 1991), an additional 105,000 people (+8.6 percent) were looking for a job: 1.159 million men (+21.8 percent) and 107,000 women (+8 percent).

We should point out right away that these figures reflect reality only to some extent. Actually, a good many job seekers are not included, simply because they did not file applications, or because they looked for jobs in small private companies. As far as women are concerned, just consider the woman-work equation that remains to be solved in our society.

All the same, these statistics show rather clearly the seriousness of unemployment in our country, and the worrying proportions it is assuming, with highly significant indices that augur no good, at least in the immediate future.

For instance, 856,000 of the unemployed (out of the ONS total of 1.266 million) have never worked.

In other words, most of them are young people (16 to 29): drop-outs, vocational school or university graduates. The youngest are the most strongly affected, with 328,000 unemployed in the 16 to 19 age group, and 501,000 in the 20 to 24 group.

Concerning unemployed university graduates, we should mention the committees formed by various branches (medical sciences, architecture) in order to find jobs, and we should note that, in spite of the favorable results yielded by this approach, it is plagued by a difficult problem: the sociological problem that affects girls who refuse to work far from their parents' domicile.

According to the ONS, 18.8 percent of female university graduates experience difficulties in finding a job, compared with 4.6 percent of recent male graduates.

Note also two facts that reveal the seriousness of the situation.

First, we have (in 1991) a record average period of 26.8 months without work for an increasing number of people, namely 63 percent of all job seekers.

Then, there is a relatively new phenomenon: far from being choosy, the unemployed are willing to accept jobs below their qualifications, and without conditions. In this respect, the rates mentioned by the ONS (and for young people to boot) are high: 89 percent will accept a job even if it is below their qualifications; 87 percent do not mind if it is far from where they live; 79 percent are willing to work even if the pay is low; 63 percent will accept physically demanding or dangerous jobs.

This is quite significant when we know that, not so long ago, Algerians were really "choosy" in matters of employment, and would accept only "decent" jobs.

Times, however, have changed, and it has become hard to earn one's bread. So, it does not matter what kind of work is involved. At any rate, it is better than being unemployed.

### ONS Reports Drop in Wholesale Trade

93AF0199C Algiers LIBERTE in French 2 Nov 92 p 5

[Article: "Statistics: Wholesale Trade Is Declining Rapidly;" first paragraph is LIBERTE introduction]

[Text] After the decline of the industrial sector revealed in the bulletin issued by the ONS [National Office of Statistics] it was the turn of wholesale trade to continue a chronic decline in its activity, on the order of 26 percent, during the first half of 1992.

The National Office of Statistics (ONS) has just published the total figures on wholesale trade activity in its latest bulletin. Apparently, this branch of trade is far from flourishing. According to the ONS, the second quarter of 1992 recorded negative results.

In effect, nearly 72 percent of the wholesale trade companies are only partially obtaining their needs, or less than 50 percent, contrary to the performance of the companies that are active in retail trade.

Retail trade companies have succeeded in obtaining about 75 percent of their needs.

This decline, linked to the problem of supply, depends in reality on existing import restraints. In turn, imports have an inevitable impact on distribution. It is particularly the sectors of energy, lubricants, raw and semifinished products, and hardware that have been the most affected by the decline in stocks, or 79.2 percent in wholesale trade and 54.5 percent in retail trade, during the second quarter of 1992. Only the sector of textiles, leather, and shoes does not seem to be experiencing this decline, according to the ONS bulletin. This sector reportedly experienced a very noticeable improvement during the second quarter, or an increase of 14.4 percent, compared to the same quarter of 1991, and a growth rate of 4.7 percent for the first half of 1992, compared to the first half of 1991. However, this improvement reportedly only affected semifinished textile products, without having any impact on consumption goods, which declined by 8.6 percent.

On the other hand the agricultural and food sector experienced substantial and permanent declines estimated at 80 percent. The same rate applied to supplies of machinery and equipment goods, raw materials, and semifinished products.

However, the wood and paper sector was the worst affected, with wood experiencing a decline of 36 percent in the first quarter of 1992 and a further decline in the second quarter of 12 percent.

The latter decline really affected this sector, particularly in production and distribution.

### Problems Causing Housing Shortages Detailed

93AF0233B Algiers ALGER REPUBLICAIN in French  
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[Article by Faycal Medjahed: "A Builder Expresses His Anger"—first paragraph is ALGER REPUBLICAIN introduction]

[Text] The housing deficit is estimated at 1.5 million dwellings in 1992. The shortage of low-cost housing is particularly acute, but nothing has dampened the general need for new housing in Algeria—neither governmental programs, nor the "villa boom" of the 1980's, which government officials hailed at that time as a solution to the housing crisis. But a solution may be within reach.

Even if we set aside runaway population growth and countless cases of nepotism and other unethical means of distributing housing, there would still be a shortage. How can the housing crisis be brought quickly under control when the national debt stands at 74 billion dinars?

Mr. Abdesselam's government has put housing and the broader problem of construction and public works on its list of priorities and recently allocated nearly 1 billion dinars to build 60,000 low-cost housing units by the end of the year. However laudable the intention, it is yet another costly and burdensome response because it relies on conventional construction techniques and materials (reinforced concrete) in a context that is both new and unusual.

An architect and city planner, Mr. Abdelhamid Bouchehal, deplores the fact that such decisions are made without consulting the experts. "The government is handling the problem of construction unilaterally, as in a one-party system."

"We continue to build using the same old techniques and materials, but there has been great progress in science, technology, and research in new construction materials. A major innovation over firebrick and siliceous limestone is reinforced soil-concrete."

That is where Mr. Abdelmadjid Belahcene comes into the picture. He is a manufacturer who holds an internationally and nationally recognized patent to transform industrially produced aggregate into soil-concrete, a process that was featured in a nationally televised report not long ago. His arguments are solid, his assessments are blunt, and he is very angry at the tepid response his proposals have received from public officials. The UGTA, [General Union of Algerian Workers], which is interested in ways to rapidly build housing for its workers in connection with future cooperatives, is the only organization to have begun negotiations with the iconoclastic builder.

Mr. Belahcene's view of the situation is simple. He does not understand why Algeria has a housing shortage in 1992 since the country was able to afford some of the best names in the construction industry worldwide—



Bouygues, Dumez, Quillery, and Imprefal—during the prosperous years when oil revenues were flowing in. The decision to foster “a conventional industry producing heavy and intermediate prefabricated structures should have resulted in a surplus of housing.”

That clearly did not happen. Therefore, according to Mr. Belahcene, the cause of the current housing shortage is not a lack of funds, as often claimed; its cause is to be found in factors that have been kept secret for unstated reasons.

The causes of the backlog have never been brought to light. The builders themselves cite three types of stumbling blocks:

- inadequate ports, railroads, and road networks operating at saturation levels;
- insufficient gravel and sand quarries;
- a lack of skilled manpower (masons, metalworkers, and formwork setters) trained in conventional construction methods.

“This last point proves that even if there had been no physical obstacles to overcome, the housing shortage would have been just as acute,” says Mr. Belahcene.

In the face of these various obstacles, a logical response would be to take a completely new approach to housing construction, given the national debt, unemployment, and the high cost of imported construction materials (wood, steel, and cement)... Belahcene believes it is possible “to solve the problem of unemployment, build new housing quickly, develop natural resources, and spend less foreign exchange on capital equipment and consumer goods, all in one stroke. He proposes using reinforced soil-concrete not in place of conventional materials, but along with them.”

That is made clear in a comparison of the costs and socio-economic consequences of investing in (a) red brick or siliceous limestone and (b) manufactured aggregate.

To take Case A, a brick factory with a production capacity of 50,000 metric tons would cost 20 million French francs to build and would create 35 jobs.

In Case B, the same initial investment (20 million French francs) would pay for the construction of 33 reinforced soil-concrete factories with a capacity of 252,200 metric tons a year and would create 526 jobs.

In Case A, the cost of creating one job would be 571,487 French francs as compared with 38,023 in Case B. The figures show that Case B would result in five times as many housing units and create 14 times as many jobs as Case A.

Another advantage, “using good economic sense and assuming an even distribution, it would be possible in Case B to build factories in 33 towns—not just in one town—and the product could be manufactured near the construction sites where it would be used.” The differences between the two scenarios are even greater when one begins to compare the cost of artificial stone with that of siliceous limestone blocks, not to mention the substantial savings in freight costs measured in metric ton per kilometer.

At the political level, Mr. Belahcene is convinced that Algeria can prove to its foreign partners that it can offer compensation and that “those who now scoff at the Algerian market are very mistaken.”

Technical considerations aside, the broader issue of city planning, the building industry and its future in Algeria are raised here. “To use reinforced soil-concrete does not mean that the other approaches cannot be used,” Mr. Bouchemal would later say. “But reinforced soil-concrete does give hope of a rapid solution for all those who are homeless. It is affordable for all income levels, and it is modern, ecological, and intelligent in that it offers a wide range of creative possibilities to architects and city planners.

Then, what is holding things up? The manufacturer himself does not know the answer to that question. He told us that his patent has been approved by the Ministry of Housing, that his product was favorably reviewed by CLERI [expansion not given] and approved by the CTC [Structural Engineering Control Organization] and the Ministry of Youth for use in 73 youth cooperatives (6,570 units/year and 10,000 jobs).

The equipment needed in order to move ahead has been held up in Belgium. Although a portion of state funds (which will eventually account for 30 percent of the project's equipment costs) has already been disbursed by the Treasury, the banks have delayed payment of their share. Meanwhile, Algerians continue to live in crowded and unsafe housing. The UGTA has realized the value of reinforced soil-concrete and is about to enter into a project with Belahcene to build 26,000 low-cost units, a project that is expected to create 40,000 jobs. Can anyone do better than that?